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General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

First Committee
5th meeting
Wednesday, 5 October 2005, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Choi Young-jin ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Organization of work

The Chairman: Before the Committee continues its general debate, I should like to make some comments regarding the next phase of the Committee's work.

Let me first remind all delegations again that the deadline for submission of draft resolutions under all disarmament and international security agenda items is next Wednesday, 12 October, at 6 p.m. Delegations are requested to submit their draft resolutions by the deadline in order to enable the Secretariat to make them available to the Committee as official documents as soon as possible.

Now, let us briefly discuss the second phase of the Committee's work. In connection with the preparations for the second phase of the Committee's work — the thematic discussion on item subjects and the introduction and consideration of draft resolutions — an indicative timetable was circulated yesterday afternoon as document A/C.1/60/CRP.2. In preparing the indicative timetable, I largely followed the practice already established by the Committee during previous sessions of the General Assembly. I would like to propose that we carry out our discussions for the second phase in the following manner.

First, during the first week of the thematic discussions, the meetings on 10 and 11 October will be dedicated to questions related to nuclear weapons. As indicated in document A/C.1/60/CRP.2, however, it is my intention, with the agreement of the Committee, to allow the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to make a statement during the latter part of the meeting on Monday afternoon in order to accommodate his schedule. Secondly, the meeting on 12 October will be dedicated to other weapons of mass destruction and to outer space, focusing on disarmament aspects. Thirdly, the two meetings on 13 and 14 October will be devoted to questions concerning conventional weapons. Fourthly, starting with the second week of thematic discussions, on the morning of 17 October we will discuss regional disarmament and security, and other disarmament measures and international security. Finally, on 18 October the Committee will discuss the issue of disarmament machinery.

As can be seen from the note at the bottom of document A/C.1/60/CRP.2, it is my intention to divide the seven formal meetings into three segments so that the Committee can fully utilize the time allocated to it by engaging in productive discussions and by introducing all the draft resolutions in an efficient and timely manner. Some meetings in the first segment will start with a guest speaker, as indicated in the conference room paper. After the speaker makes his or her opening statement, I will briefly suspend the formal meeting so that we can have an informal question-and-answer session with the guest speaker. Afterwards, we shall resume the formal meeting and proceed to the second segment, which will consist of interventions by delegations on the specific subject under consideration.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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Although 35 years have passed since adoption of the NPT, the results are still disappointing, and the dangers linked to these weapons persist.

The arsenals of the nuclear Powers contain tens of thousands of nuclear weapons, and thousands of them remain on maximum alert. More alarming still is that no tangible progress has to date been recorded in the realm of nuclear disarmament. The objectives set forth in the NPT have not been achieved, least of all that of creating a world free of nuclear weapons. Non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT have committed themselves to not developing or acquiring nuclear weapons in return for a commitment by nuclear-weapon Powers to negotiate in good faith to achieve nuclear disarmament. So long as the nuclear Powers do not live up to that commitment, the non-proliferation system remains in jeopardy.

My delegation stresses the need to reinvigorate the Conference on Disarmament and immediately to begin negotiations within an ad hoc committee to conclude a treaty banning the production and stockpiling of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. Such a treaty must be non-discriminatory and fully and effectively verifiable. We reaffirm the principle of multilateralism in dealing with disarmament issues, through the strengthening of the multilateral disarmament machinery; that is the only way to achieve general and complete disarmament.

My country attaches utmost importance to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all parts of the world. These are a positive force for strengthening international peace and security. In spite of the international community's efforts to make the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, Israel still possesses military nuclear facilities and hundreds of nuclear warheads that pose a grave threat to peace and security, not only in the Middle East but also in Europe, West Asia and Africa. This constitutes an absolute challenge to and total disregard of the international community and its will, as repeatedly expressed through resolutions and decisions adopted in the United Nations and other relevant regional and international organizations. More than ever before, the international community, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, must shoulder their full responsibility and put pressure on Israel, using all means at their disposal to oblige it to sign the NPT and become a party to other relevant treaties, as well as to commit itself unreservedly to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This has to happen if the international community sincerely wishes to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including nuclear terrorism.

My country still suffers greatly from a variety of problems related to landmines that are relics of previous wars. According to United Nations estimates, at least 10 million mines have lain buried on Libyan territory ever since the Second World War. They have killed or maimed thousands of our innocent citizens and have hamstrung development projects in the vast areas that were planted with mines. Here, we stress the need for those countries that laid the mines to shoulder their responsibility and immediately provide my country with all maps and other information regarding the mines and compensate the victims and their families for the damage and suffering the mines have caused. My country must also receive compensation for the lingering effects of hamstrung development plans in and near the many mined areas.

My delegation reaffirms its call for the Mediterranean basin to be transformed into a zone of peace, where all its peoples can live in mutual respect and harmony. This cannot be achieved until all foreign fleets have been withdrawn and military bases dismantled, and the sovereignty of all States throughout the region respected, and until there are guarantees that there will be no interference in internal affairs and no threat or imposition of sanctions.

We reaffirm our forceful condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including State terrorism. It is our view that eliminating this phenomenon requires a clear United Nations definition of terrorism, taking into account its root causes, including foreign occupation and its negative effects and heinous practices against occupied populations, in addition to economic and political injustice. We must draw a distinction between terrorist acts, on the one hand, and the right to self-determination, and the right to fight foreign occupation on the other. Libya was one of the first countries to call for an international conference to define terrorism, determine its causes and find ways to fight it effectively. Libya is a signatory and party to all international and regional counter-terrorism conventions.

Finally, my delegation reaffirms its readiness to cooperate fully with all other members to make general

and complete disarmament a reality, thus creating a world where peace and stability reign.

Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan) (spoke in Russian): At the outset, Sir, let me join in congratulating you upon your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I assure you and the other members of the Bureau of the full support of the delegation of Uzbekistan for your efforts to carry out the activities of the Committee effectively and constructively.

This year, we have witnessed major regional and multilateral efforts to bolster the process of non-proliferation and disarmament, including by enhancing the effectiveness of existing multilateral mechanisms. Unfortunately, the international community failed to make use of the chance that was offered to take significant decisions at the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and at the recent United Nations summit. Our expectations in terms of seeking ways to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in today's international relations have not been met. As we see it, the primary reason for this is that, while Member States unequivocally condemn the threat of the spread of weapons of mass destruction, they differ in their assessments of the importance of fighting the root causes of the spread of this weaponry and the factors contributing to it.

However, this does not mean that the process of non-proliferation and disarmament is at an impasse. Opportunities continue to exist for States to take immediate, effective measures to prevent the erosion of the regime of nuclear controls. In our view, the following factors should form the basis of a quest for compromise as we address the issue of strengthening the non-proliferation and disarmament process.

First, any efforts in this area must be undertaken exclusively on a multilateral basis, taking into account the views of the majority of Member States. Unilateral, imposed norms or rules can only deepen the rift in the international community on issues of non-proliferation and disarmament.

Secondly, major conditions for peace and stability are the implementation of commitments under international security treaties and the strengthening of the international machinery for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). In our view, this could be the starting point for further multilateral talks.

Thirdly, the growing black market in nuclear materials and technologies is cause for concern, as are the broadening scope of activities of terrorist groups and attempts by them to acquire WMD components. In this regard, we advocate continued strengthening of the regime established under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on denying access by non-State actors to WMD. And we join in the appeal to bring about the prompt entry into force of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

Fourthly, the role of non-nuclear States in international relations must continue to increase. Further efforts in this area, we believe, should be aimed at establishing a system of universal and unconditional security safeguards for non-nuclear States. In this regard, Uzbekistan welcomes the outcome of the first Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, held in April in Mexico.

Finally, particular attention must be devoted to new ideas and proposals aimed at strengthening the process of non-proliferation and disarmament. In this context, Uzbekistan supports the initiative of Norway and six other countries representing various regions of the world (see A/60/415), aimed at enhancing collective security against growing nuclear threats.

Uzbekistan is firm in its commitments under international non-proliferation and disarmament treaties, and it advocates strengthening the role of multilateral United Nations mechanisms in this area. An important focus of our foreign policy is the construction of a new element in regional security: a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. The States of the region base this concept on three elements: ensuring the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons; addressing environmental issues related to past nuclear activities; and safeguarding the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region would be an effective contribution to strengthening the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. Specifically, it would help to strengthen the NPT and to counter nuclear terrorism.

We note the contributions of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations and of the International Atomic Energy Agency to the drafting of the text for a Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty. We call once

again on nuclear countries to work towards a common position with States of the region on this issue.

In conclusion, let me express our hope that the work of the First Committee will qualitatively differ from the results of the NPT Review Conference and the 2005 world summit with respect to international security, non-proliferation and disarmament. We believe that the difficulties that Member States have faced in taking decisions at this year's major conferences should not be allowed to hamper the First Committee's efforts to reach a new consensus on international security issues.

The delegation of Uzbekistan expresses its readiness to cooperate with all other members to succeed in that undertaking.

Mr. Sealy (Trinidad and Tobago): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are Members of the United Nations.

We wish to express our pleasure, Sir, at seeing you chairing the First Committee. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election and assure you of CARICOM's active and constructive participation in the First Committee's deliberations as we collectively tackle key outstanding issues in the area of disarmament and international security at this historic sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

We also wish to thank Mr. Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his statement at the outset of the work of the Committee. We have taken note of the measures that he has proposed, and we look forward to working with like-minded delegations to bring about the full realization of the goals and objectives for disarmament and non-proliferation.

CARICOM delegations that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement fully align themselves with the statement made by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement.

It should be recalled that in the United Nations system, both the General Assembly and the Security Council have competence in matters of disarmament. Article 11, paragraph 1, of the United Nations Charter states that the General Assembly may consider

> "the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments and may make recommendations with regard to such principles to the Members or to the Security Council or to both".

And Article 26 states that

> "the Security Council shall be responsible for formulating, with the assistance of the Military Staff Committee referred to in Article 47, plans to be submitted to the Members of the United Nations for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments".

One may ask how well the General Assembly, which is the most representative organ of the international community, has fulfilled its Charter mandate in the field of disarmament and arms control over the past 60 years. There is no doubt that we have made some progress in that time. In 1959, for example, by its resolution 1378 (XIV), the General Assembly endorsed the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. Since then, we have adopted numerous General Assembly resolutions, requested many reports, held special sessions devoted to disarmament and established specialized deliberative and negotiating disarmament machinery.

The General Assembly has also been instrumental in exhorting States members of the international community to become parties to various multilateral treaties such as the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water; the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC); the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC); the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines; and the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. All those multilaterally agreed disarmament instruments have served to protect humanity from the threat of annihilation by nuclear war, from a more painful, slower death from the effects of chemical or biological warfare and from being maimed.

But we need to do more — in fact, significantly more — if we are to save the present and succeeding generations from the horrors of a war fought with weapons of mass destruction and from the threat of radiological and nuclear terrorism. In that regard, CARICOM delegations note that the recently adopted International Convention for the Suppression of Acts

of Nuclear Terrorism fills an important lacuna in the corpus of international law aimed at establishing a criminal law regime to deal adequately with acts of terrorism.

We must also do more to reanimate global disarmament leadership and recharge it with the political will and the determination necessary to ensure that the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament and the NPT and other review conferences, which constitute our crucial multilateral disarmament machinery, are capable of effectively and efficiently discharging their respective mandates and thus of overcoming the deadlock and the impasse in which they find themselves.

In that regard, CARICOM delegations are disappointed at the failure of the May 2005 NPT Review Conference to produce tangible and substantive results, and we are equally disappointed at the failure of the High-level Plenary Meeting to address the important global issue of disarmament and international security in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1).

We have spoken enough in these hallowed halls. All that needs to be said has been said. We should now move to the stage of the implementation of resolutions adopted on the recommendation of the First Committee. We continue to live in an insecure world and have yet to build a world free from fear. In his special comment published in issue No. 1, 2004, of the Disarmament Forum of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the Secretary-General writes,

> "The need for progress in the field of disarmament is therefore as great today as it has ever been. Indeed, given the combination of old and new threats that we face, the world cannot safely endure another half century without major progress on disarmament".

Accordingly, CARICOM delegations are of the view that urgent steps must be taken to rid the world of the tens of thousands of nuclear weapons in existence. That is a responsibility and an international duty of the five declared nuclear-weapon States stemming from the clear legal obligation established in article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

CARICOM is of the view that there must be universal adherence to, and implementation of, the NPT, the CWC, the BWC and the CTBT in order to spare us the danger of a nuclear, chemical or biological holocaust by design or by accident and to put a halt to the qualitative improvement of weapons of mass destruction. CARICOM is also of the view that there must be a drastic reduction in the annual spending on arms, which was estimated as exceeding the astronomical figure of $1 trillion in 2004, while billions of people struggle to survive in abject poverty on less than $1 per day.

CARICOM is of the view that the maritime transport of radioactive wastes must be halted, particularly along Caribbean sea lanes, as that practice poses an additional threat to those zones' already inherent vulnerability to exogenous shocks. In addition, an effective liability and compensation regime must be established.

Finally, CARICOM delegations are of the view that an end must be put to the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, which cause so much death and destruction in various conflicts all over the world and which, in many of our societies, fuel high levels of crime and personal insecurity.

In that context, CARICOM delegations would have preferred the adoption of a legally binding instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons, which would have served as a good legal basis for cooperation among law enforcement and other authorities in detecting the point of diversion of those arms from the legal to the illicit trade.

All those objectives can and must be attained through a thoroughly overhauled, revitalized and strengthened United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery which allows each organ to play its role fully and not to be stymied in the discharge of its weighty responsibilities by the narrow national self interests of a few. We must seek consensus, but consensus must not be an excuse for inaction. We need new ideas, specific plans and projects and forward-looking proposals, as well as the necessary flexibility so that we can negotiate compromises.

CARICOM stands ready to work with other States and the relevant United Nations institutions in achieving solutions to all of those issues. In that regard, CARICOM delegations welcome the regional efforts of United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, and we look forward to increased

cooperation and assistance in areas pertinent to disarmament and development in the Caribbean.

Let us therefore rededicate ourselves, on the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, to implementing the General Assembly's Charter mandate in the field of disarmament and arms regulation so that we can live in and bequeath to future generations a more peaceful, stable and secure world. Let us commit ourselves immediately to give new direction and meaning to our work by making maximum use of the Open-ended Working Group charged with making preparations for the holding of a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament and by imbuing that process with a renewed, reinvigorated and dynamic agenda aimed at finding new common ground on disarmament, verification of disarmament processes, arms control, non-proliferation and related international security matters.

Mr. Yushkevich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Belarus, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. You may count on our support and cooperation in your work.

This year the durability of the international security system — that has developed alongside the United Nations — continued to be tested, and its performance has become another argument in favour of the need for reform. Phenomena that quite recently we cautiously called "emerging negative trends" in diplomatic language are becoming recognized realities. One such reality were the increased differences regarding the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The 2005 NPT Review Conference yet again demonstrated the lack of common views and approaches to address nuclear non-proliferation.

Belarus has demonstrated its interest in strengthening the international regime of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, enhancing the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and strengthening mutual trust. On the eve of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, the President of the Republic of Belarus took the decision to sign the Additional Protocol to its IAEA Safeguards Agreement pursuant to the NPT. Recognizing the serious risks of the use of nuclear technology by terrorists and the need for urgent collective action by the international community to fight international terrorism, Belarus has signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

Unfortunately, the list of things that still need to be done to eradicate the nuclear threat is not growing any shorter. An important agenda item continues to be the prohibition of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices. The Conference on Disarmament needs to start negotiations on that issue as soon as possible.

Let me express the hope that the recent Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty could give new political momentum to the ratification process for that Treaty. Effectively resolving problems related to existing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and the possible development of new types of such weapons is, in our view, one of the key tasks facing the United Nations and the First Committee. It is a long and difficult road from developing WMDs to recognizing the threat they pose to peace and then establishing effective universal international monitoring mechanisms. The cost of that journey is extremely high: great loss of human life; economic resources diverted from development; and years of international exertion to ameliorate the situation and control and eliminate WMDs. In that regard, Belarus will submit a draft resolution entitled "Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons" for consideration by the First Committee. We hope for the support of members and request interested delegations to consider becoming sponsors.

Hotbeds of tension exist in various regions of the world, and some continue to grow. In those hotspots, it is not rare for might to be used to make right. Conventional weapons and mines constantly claim new victims. We are convinced that the only sure way to resolve those problems is through a multilateral approach, requiring the joint efforts of the entire international community. Our country attaches great importance to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and welcomes the June 2005 adoption of a draft political instrument on marking and tracing small arms and light weapons. That document reflects the varying approaches and financial and technical capabilities of States to implement its provisions.

Belarus continues to advocate universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We are fully complying with our obligations under that Convention. In that connection, we would like to thank States and organizations that are assisting Belarus to resolve issues relating to the destruction of its stockpiles of anti-personnel mines.

Today, against the backdrop of criticism of the United Nations, and Organization which personifies the multilateral, global approach to resolving questions of peace and security, many States are looking to regional and subregional military and political alliances and organizations to guarantee their security. Belarus believes that the regional approach to security is important and necessary. This year our country had the opportunity to demonstrate its vision of how to resolve international security issues during our chairmanship of the Forum for Security Cooperation of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Also of great importance for regional security is the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which has observer status in the General Assembly. Over the past year the CSTO conducted a joint anti-drug operation and coordinated efforts on post-conflict development of Afghanistan, and it has been unifying its peacekeeping capability.

One foreign policy priority for Belarus is to develop regional and bilateral confidence-building measures and active cooperation with neighbouring States in order to establish a belt of good-neighbourliness and security. At the same time, we understand that the destructive force of weapons of mass destruction, the presence of advanced conventional weapons systems and the nearly universal access to weaponry, including small arms and light weapons mean that the regional approach is important but must, above all, be viewed as a component of the global approach. In our view, it was that kind of global, universal approach that was the basis for the ministerial declaration on disarmament issued by seven countries (A/60/415, annex). We regret that the delegation's provisions have not enjoyed universal recognition in the United Nations.

We are certain that the First Committee will continue to be an effective United Nations forum in the area of international security, disarmament and non-proliferation. It has a full agenda and is capable of taking specific decisions in the interests of the entire international community.

In conclusion, I wish all members of the Committee a successful and constructive session.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): The Australian delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Committee. I suppose it is something of a double-edged sword for you. But I always like to have friends in high places, so I am delighted to see such a good friend in that position. I can assure you that we very much look forward to working closely with you over the coming weeks.

It would be wrong if I did not begin by expressing our deepest sympathy to the Government and the people of Indonesia — as we have done with respect to many other places — on the terrorist attacks in Bali over the weekend, which claimed the lives of a number of Australians as well. These terrible events are a reminder of the continuing threat that terrorism poses to all of us.

A year ago, we looked forward to two major opportunities — the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the United Nations summit just held — to make our world more secure through action on non-proliferation and disarmament. Today, however, I think we have to acknowledge that the international community squandered those two opportunities. The failure to strengthen efforts against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) is a particular concern, given what we know to be terrorists' desire to acquire and use such weapons. We should be quite clear: multilateral processes cannot waste opportunities in that way and remain a viable option for addressing contemporary security threats. The stakes are too high for political point-scoring and posturing.

Australia supports strong multilateral approaches to non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament; we always have, and we will continue to do so. Treaties such as the NPT and measures like Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) are fundamental to the norms of WMD non-proliferation and disarmament. At the recent summit, Australia participated in the Norwegian initiative to promote an outcome on non-proliferation and disarmament.

Yet the disappointments of this year have underscored the importance of pragmatic measures to complement broader multilateral efforts. For that reason, Australia, along with more than 60 other countries, is fully engaged in the Proliferation Security Initiative to disrupt and deter illicit WMD-related shipments. And, as Chair of the Australia Group — now in its twentieth year — we are working to ensure effective controls on chemical and biological agents in order to prevent their misuse.

There is an opportunity for the Committee to follow the example of such practical initiatives. Indeed, the adoption by consensus last year of resolution 59/90, on preventing the illicit transfer and use of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS), showed that the Committee can respond to contemporary security concerns. We will reintroduce a draft resolution on MANPADS again this year.

As the Committee implements the reforms agreed upon last year, we should focus on practical efforts that we can make to strengthen international security. Australia has long advocated measures such as the Model Additional Protocol, a fissile material cut-off treaty and the Hague Code of Conduct as practical steps against the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery. Last month in New York, as President of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) article XIV Conference, we showed our commitment to the entry into force of the CTBT. And we support international efforts — including adoption of a marking and tracing instrument and work towards an arms-trade treaty — to curb the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons. I am delighted to hear so many other delegations refer to such efforts as well.

The Australian delegation will work constructively with you, Mr. Chairman, and with others in exploring these and other issues in the thematic debate. We hope that by doing so, we can help the Committee become a more effective vehicle for promoting practical measures to address emerging and existing threats to international security.

Ms. Fernando (Sri Lanka): I should like to express my delegation's sincere felicitations to you, Mr. Chairman, as a distinguished representative of Asia, and to the other members of the Bureau on your election. I assure you, Sir, of our full support as you continue the work of your predecessors to reinvigorate the First Committee through interactive debate aimed at reaching a more productive outcome. Following our tradition, let me also commend the officials of the Secretariat, Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and his teams in New York and Geneva for their invaluable dedication to the cause of multilateral disarmament, even in the face of a precarious financial situation.

On this sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, it is natural to recall the sombre global security situation in which the United Nations was born: the devastating world war that was unleashed in Europe and that concluded in Asia with equally horrifying results. The United Nations Charter was drafted and adopted before the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, the very first resolution adopted — unanimously — by the General Assembly at its first session, on 24 January 1946 — resolution 1 (I) — called for the elimination of all atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction.

Today, 60 years later, we have to ask ourselves why that early consensus on multilateral disarmament and arms control has now become so imperilled that no agreement was possible even on a few paragraphs for inclusion in the outcome document (resolution 60/1) of the September High-level Plenary Meeting. Secretary-General Kofi Annan was right to remind us that our biggest challenge and our biggest failing is our inability to agree on nuclear proliferation and disarmament.

We share the ultimate dismay of many at the inability of the May 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to adopt concrete measures towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons. For too long now, the multilateral institutions of the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament have remained at an impasse, unable to agree on a programme of work. The First Committee therefore bears a special responsibility to promote dialogue and constructive engagement and to build bridges towards the eventual return to multilateral negotiations in the great cause of disarmament.

Global terrorism remains one of the most persistent concerns of the heads of State or Government who addressed the High-level Plenary Meeting in September. My country, Sri Lanka, faces a

special challenge in dealing with a rebel group while engaged in a peace process. My President, Chandrika Kumaratunga, has called on the United Nations to promote mechanisms aimed at supporting States that are genuinely committed to democracy and peace processes and at sanctioning terrorist groups that undermine them. She has reminded the international community that failure to do so would only erode the credibility of peacemaking efforts and years of work to codify international legal and other measures against terrorism.

It was in that context that Sri Lanka welcomed the adoption of the Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and non-State actors. We submitted our first national report in May this year and will continue to work closely with the Committee established to monitor the implementation of that important resolution. In addition, we will soon be putting in place comprehensive national legislation to give effect to the Chemical Weapons Convention, to which Sri Lanka is a party.

Only two disarmament issues — those of landmines and small arms and light weapons — found reflection in the outcome document of the September High-level Plenary Meeting due to the existing humanitarian consensus.

Since the signing of the ceasefire agreement in February 2002, the Government of Sri Lanka has embarked on a comprehensive humanitarian mine-action programme with the broad objective of making Sri Lanka a mine-free country by 2006. An important first step was taken last year when Sri Lanka acceded to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), including its amended Protocols II, III and IV. A further step was taken in June this year when Sri Lanka submitted a report, on a voluntary basis, under article 7 of the Ottawa Convention on landmines. Those are some initial but significant steps taken towards achieving the ultimate objective of acceding to the Ottawa Convention, to which Sri Lanka is committed in principle.

While weapons of mass destruction and their proliferation pose a continuing threat to humankind, small arms pose the great threat to people in today's conflict and war zones. We therefore welcome the steady progress made this year on an instrument for the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons, moving towards the Review Conference in 2006. It has been our longstanding position that supplies of small arms and light weapons should be limited only to Governments or to duly authorized internationally recognized entities, in order to prevent their illicit transfer into the hands of terrorists or non-State actors.

Sri Lanka has been actively engaged in the national implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms since its adoption in 2001. A National Commission has been set up, and, as one of its initial undertakings, a national survey will be carried out this year that is intended to contribute to the formulation of a comprehensive National Plan of Action to deal with all aspects of the issue of the proliferation of illicit small arms in the country.

Sri Lanka has also submitted two reports at the last two biennial meetings of States on the implementation of the Programme of Action, in 2003 and 2005. In that connection, my delegation would like to extend its appreciation to the Department for Disarmament Affairs and to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for their assistance. Later this year, Sri Lanka will host an international meeting on the issue of small arms transfers in collaboration with the Government of the United Kingdom.

In the Conference on Disarmament this year States continued to express support — and increasingly at the highest levels — for the role of the Conference as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. Delegations to the Conference continued to work steadily to find a solution that would allow them to return to substantive work, while the majority of delegations once again expressed support for a comprehensive and balanced work programme based on the agenda.

My delegation was pleased to note that during the course of this year an increasing number of delegations have expressed support for the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee within the Conference on Disarmament on the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Let me recall that, over the last several years, my delegation, together with the delegation of Egypt, has introduced in the First Committee a resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space calling for the recommencement of stalled negotiations and confidence-building measures on space security at the earliest possible time. The increased support that our

draft resolution has garnered over the years is a significant development. Recent initiatives taken by the Governments of Canada, Russia and China to further examine the issues of space security in Geneva on the sidelines of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva have resulted in a closer examination of the international legal regime to protect the sanctity of space as a common heritage of humankind.

In keeping with the understanding in this Committee that general statements be reduced and focused, our intervention has been confined at this time to only a few priority areas. However, we look forward to participating actively in the interactive meetings on specific items of the programme of work.

Mrs. Asmady (Indonesia): Mr. Chairman, let me join others in extending our congratulations to you on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of the First Committee, as well as to the other members of the Bureau.

The past year has witnessed a deepening crisis in our endeavours to effectively address issues relating to arms control, disarmament and international security. Narrow self-interests and exacerbated unilateralism have weakened multilateral forums, which were established specifically to deal with those issues.

My delegation shares the deep frustration over the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held last May, to adopt any substantive recommendations that would demonstrate a resounding commitment to the three pillars of the Treaty — non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It has not escaped our attention that, for the first time in the history of the NPT, the Review Conference was bogged down from the start in wrangling over the agenda and the programme of work among its Main Committees.

These deeply disturbing developments were further compounded by the omission of any reference to non-proliferation and disarmament in the historic document adopted by the High-level Plenary Meeting held last month. My delegation shares the Secretary-General's characterization of such an omission as inexcusable and his view that weapons of mass destruction pose a grave danger to us all.

It is noteworthy that at the recent United Nations summit, the nuclear-weapon States, as they did at the NPT Review Conference, rejected any reference in the summit document to disarmament obligations under the NPT. That opened the door for other States to jump into negotiations on the document with their own amendments and objections.

In the view of my delegation — which I think is the view of many Member States — those developments will make it more difficult to break the existing stalemate in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Even worse, it has made it more difficult to persuade other States to foreclose their nuclear options as long as the nuclear-weapon States insist on maintaining and even improving theirs.

We should also add to that list of developments, which give rise to pessimism, our concern over the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, divisiveness in the First Committee, and the impasse in the Disarmament Commission — all due primarily to a lack of political will, particularly on the part of the nuclear-weapon States.

Taken together, those developments have created a grave crisis in multilateral diplomacy on disarmament. Some time ago, the Secretary-General warned us about the rusting of the machinery for disarmament diplomacy and underlined the need for concerted efforts to bridge existing differences on key issues on the disarmament agenda under multilateral auspices. We should therefore continue our efforts to garner support and achieve a new consensus for further action on those vital issues.

In the process of confronting the challenges of insecurity and instability, Indonesia has begun the task of building cooperation across the Indian Ocean. The Asian-African Summit meeting, held in Jakarta last April, has formalized various channels for such cooperation. Its Strategic Partnership Declaration is pragmatic and forward-looking and will serve as a bridge between the two continents.

Of particular significance is the commitment of that Partnership to strive for multilateralism and a central role for the United Nations in global affairs. Thus, it highlights the importance of dialogue among nations to address issues of common concern such as armed conflict, transnational crime, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

Likewise, Indonesia joined the seven-nation ministerial declaration initiated by Norway (A/60/415, annex). It was clear that that initiative — which is the product of various regions and represents differing views — was intended to find a pragmatic way forward so as to break the present impasse with regard to global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.

Against that backdrop, the problem of non-compliance with global arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation treaties has been most severe. The twin crises of non-compliance with obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the failure of nuclear-weapon States to take concrete, verifiable and irreversible steps to eliminate their arsenals have led to a crisis of confidence in the NPT regime.

No issue demonstrates the crisis surrounding the NPT so unambiguously as the fate of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT). Although it is approaching universality, with 176 signatories and 125 ratifications, the CTBT has continued to languish owing to the refusal of some nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Treaty. That is incompatible with the successful conclusion of the Fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, held last month.

Negotiations without conditions on a verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty that focus attention on both existing stocks and the future production of weapon-usable materials — whether civilian or military — are very relevant. The urgency of stricter protection for fissile materials calls attention to the need for the successful conclusion of such negotiations without further delay.

As has been universally acknowledged, today's world remains imperilled by the threat resulting from the continued existence and unabated growth of nuclear arsenals. The only credible response to that threat is the total abolition of those arsenals. In that regard, security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, in the framework of a legally binding international convention without conditions or loopholes, have become imperative.

With regard to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), we should endeavour to strengthen its role in helping developing countries to gain unimpeded and guaranteed access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. At the same time, we should ensure the non-diversion of nuclear materials and address the growing concern over the proliferation of nuclear materials and over the provision of assistance and technology through clandestine sources, as well as the widespread alarm at the possibility of nuclear terrorism and at the potential lowering of the nuclear threshold. In responding to those compelling realities, we call upon all States to further strengthen the Agency's integrated comprehensive safeguards system and to ensure greater adherence to their Additional Protocols.

As far as nuclear-weapon-free-zones are concerned, as a State party to the Bangkok Treaty, we will continue to seek adherence to its Protocol by nuclear-weapon States, whose cooperation, recognition and support with regard to the zone are essential prerequisites for ensuring its effectiveness. We remain hopeful that the outstanding issues will be resolved with a sense of urgency that will reinforce regional security, prevent proliferation and advance the cause of nuclear disarmament.

Sharing common objectives and aspirations, the entire southern hemisphere has become a vast nuclear-free zone, with more 100 States joined together — through regional treaties and their protocols — to ban nuclear weapons from their areas. In that context, my delegation is gratified to note that significant progress has been made by the five Central Asian States towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We hope that the ongoing endeavours will continue to be supported by the States concerned, leading to the strengthening of peace and security at both the regional and global levels. We also urge all parties directly concerned to seriously consider taking the practical and urgent steps required for the implementation of the proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

With regard to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we are encouraged by the statement of principles signed last month during the six-party talks, which could lead to a diplomatic and peaceful solution, including that State rejoining the NPT and readmitting IAEA inspectors. My delegation has consistently taken the position that seeking a peaceful settlement to this complex problem through dialogue is an essential prerequisite for ensuring peace and stability in North-East Asia and for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone on the Korean peninsula.

For a number of years, an overwhelming majority of Member States have voted in favour of the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV), for well-founded reasons. The only consensus document we have is the Final Document (resolution S-10/2) adopted at the first special session on disarmament, in 1978. Since that time, numerous international conferences on issues of global concern and interest have been held, and they have taken decisions that have paved the way for multilateral solutions. Disarmament has yet to find its place in that ongoing process.

In my delegation's view, the convening of SSOD IV is the only viable alternative to our collective predicament. It would offer invaluable opportunities for multilateral negotiations on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. It would hold enormous potential not only for the promotion of the disarmament agenda, but also for the review of the multilateral disarmament machinery.

Concerning the issue of small arms and light weapons, we welcome the adoption of a draft international instrument to regulate the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons as an important achievement in our efforts to implement the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. At the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held last July, it was clear that Member States had made significant progress at the national, regional and global levels in dealing with the scourge of that illicit trade and that they had recognized the need for further action to fulfil the commitments undertaken in the Programme of Action. We look forward to the First Review Conference on the Programme of Action, scheduled for next year, to address and follow up on a number of pertinent issues, especially the modalities for enhancing international cooperation.

Finally, it is now widely acknowledged that the First Committee should, as mandated by the provisions of resolution 59/95, carry out a rationalization of its methods of work to further facilitate its endeavours aimed at addressing disarmament and security issues. We agree that the Committee must take a closer look at its procedures so that this forum can be better structured to deal with those issues in a more constructive and inclusive manner. However, such an approach should include not only procedural aspects, but also substantive questions in the context of SSOD IV. That would ensure a comprehensive and long-term solution to disarmament and security issues under multilateral auspices.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at the important sixtieth session of the General Assembly. I also take this opportunity to commend Ambassador Alfonso de Alba for his effective leadership of the Committee during the fifty-ninth session.

We associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In my statement, I will touch on three cross-cutting themes: the global security environment, regional security and institutional challenges.

The global security architecture is in a state of flux. There are clear differences in terms of the perspectives, approaches and modalities of Member States in dealing with nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We cannot gloss over the fact that negotiations on those issues broke down at the 2005 world summit, resulting in empty spaces in the summit's outcome document (resolution 60/1). The consensus underpinning disarmament and non-proliferation has eroded, and the multilateral disarmament machinery has been severely weakened. That opens the way for unilateral or discriminatory and coercive approaches.

The failure to achieve agreement on disarmament and non-proliferation at the summit reflects the deep differences among Member States and jeopardizes peace and stability, especially in regions of tension. It was against that backdrop that President General Pervez Musharraf, in his address to the General Assembly on 14 September, said that "we must evolve a new consensus to achieve disarmament and non-proliferation" (*A/60/PV.4, p. 19*). That must be promoted through consultations and agreement among all Member States, not just some self-selected Members, even if they mean well.

In building such a consensus, we cannot but start from the basic premise of the Charter that security is the right of every State. The Declaration of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to

disarmament (resolution S-10/2, part II) adopted the principle of equal security for all States. In our interdependent world, such security can best be promoted collectively, that is, multilaterally, not by national means or within restricted groups, regardless how powerful they are.

To promote genuine disarmament and non-proliferation, we must address the motives that drive States to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Those motives include perceived threats from superior conventional or non-conventional forces, the existence of disputes and conflicts with more powerful States and discrimination in the application of international norms and laws.

Of course, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) is dangerous. It can multiply the threat of the use of such weapons. But proliferation can be contained only if that containment is accompanied by a parallel effort to realize WMD disarmament. Discrimination and asymmetric possession of WMDs does not constitute a recipe for non-proliferation or regional or global stability. Nor are technology constraints a durable answer unless the motives for proliferation are addressed.

We must, of course, address the new threat of terrorists acquiring WMDs. That effort too can succeed only through collective and cooperative measures, not through coercion and discrimination.

A new security consensus should take into account the need to address existing and emerging global challenges to regional and international security. That goal can be achieved through the Conference on Disarmament or through a special session of the Disarmament Commission.

In the area of nuclear disarmament, it is essential that nuclear-weapon States take credible steps within a reasonable time frame to revalidate the bargain on disarmament and non-proliferation and restore a genuine balance between the two issues.

Although Pakistan subscribes to the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), it is a nuclear-weapon State. Pakistan is prepared to continue to act in consonance with the obligations undertaken by nuclear-weapon States under articles I, II and III of the NPT. But we cannot be expected to adhere to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei has called for the inclusion of the three non-NPT nuclear-weapon States in future talks on disarmament and non-proliferation. Such calls should be heeded. Universality is a noble objective, but it must respect existing realities.

Pakistan supports negotiations on a fissile material treaty in accordance with the Shannon mandate and the proposal made by the representatives of Algeria, Belgium, Chile, Colombia and Sweden — the five ambassadors' proposal — for a universal, non-discriminatory and internationally and effectively verifiable multilateral treaty.

We believe that there are no realistic prospects for a moratorium on fissile material production. In any event, a non-verifiable moratorium will neither enhance confidence nor advance the objective of a verifiable comprehensive fissile material treaty. Pakistan will halt fissile material production consistent with the requirements of its nuclear deterrence posture.

The security assurances offered by most nuclear-weapon States are restrictive, partial and qualified. Threats to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States in certain circumstances must be disavowed. What will enhance the security of the non-nuclear-weapon States are universal, unconditional and legally binding assurances.

We share the view that existing international legal instruments are inadequate to prevent the weaponization of outer space. China and Russia have done important work in that regard. We therefore support the five ambassadors' proposal to commence work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in an ad hoc committee of the Conference on Disarmament.

We share the global concern about unbridled ballistic missile proliferation. To avert it, we call for enhanced efforts to conclude, within the United Nations system, a comprehensive, non-discriminatory and universally negotiated treaty covering all aspects of missiles.

The chemical weapons prohibition regime, overseen by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, is an example of the success of multilateralism. However, we must speed up the destruction of declared chemical weapons and address related environmental and safety concerns.

With respect to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, we should look to the future — to the 2006 Review Conference and beyond — to make renewed efforts to build a regime that can ensure compliance and verification by all Member States.

Pakistan's strategic programme is security-driven, not status-driven. Pakistan acquired nuclear weapons only after nuclear proliferation had happened in South Asia. Our strategic posture reflects restraint and responsibility. We maintain a credible minimum nuclear deterrence.

Pakistan has taken a series of measures to ensure responsible stewardship of our nuclear programme. In 2000, we created a national command authority with a strong military-civilian interface, which oversees and manages our strategic assets and nuclear programme. A reliable command and control system has been established. Custodial controls have been streamlined and strengthened. We have passed and enforced laws to strengthen export controls on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Pakistan's Nuclear Regulatory Authority ensures the safe operation of civilian nuclear plants.

Resolute efforts should be made to defuse regional tensions and resolve conflicts in the Middle East. Pakistan supports the fulfilment of international obligations by all States and the objective of creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

All States must observe their treaty obligations. Pakistan is opposed to nuclear proliferation. However, every country has the right to develop technology for peaceful purposes. Pakistan is opposed to the use of force, which would further destabilize an already volatile region.

We welcome the progress achieved at the six-party talks aimed at ensuring a Korean peninsula free of nuclear weapons and at addressing the security concerns of all concerned States in North-East Asia.

In South Asia, Pakistan seeks to promote a strategic restraint regime with India consisting of three components: conflict resolution, nuclear and missile restraint and conventional balance. Since early 2003, we have maintained a multitrack engagement with India encompassing confidence-building measures and a composite dialogue. President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India, in their meeting in New York on 14 September, reiterated their commitment to ensuring a peaceful settlement of all pending issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, and agreed that possible options for a peacefully negotiated settlement should continue to be pursued in a sincere spirit and in a purposeful manner.

Since June 2004, Pakistan and India have held three rounds of consultations to elaborate nuclear and conventional confidence-building measures. Two days ago, on 3 October, Pakistan and India signed an agreement on advance notification of ballistic missile tests, during the Indian External Affairs Minister's visit to Islamabad.

In South Asia, we need a stable balance of conventional forces to ensure strategic stability between Pakistan and India. Massive introduction of sophisticated weaponry, including combat aircraft, aircraft carriers, airborne early warning and control systems, missile defence, nuclear submarines and warships will accentuate conventional asymmetries and compel greater reliance on nuclear and missile deterrence. There must be restraint in both demand and supply with respect to conventional weapons in South Asia. We agree with Under-Secretary-General Abe that the preponderant focus on the WMD threat should not lessen our attention to matters relating to regulation and reduction of conventional arms and armed forces.

The entire international community has an interest in ensuring strategic stability in South Asia at the lowest possible level and in averting an accelerated arms race in the region. Discriminatory approaches in the nuclear or conventional fields will not advance stability in South Asia. In the strategic and defence areas, Pakistan always demands and deserves parity of treatment with our neighbour.

The international community must seek to repair the erosion in the ability of its disarmament machinery to promote disarmament and non-proliferation. The First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission, among other bodies, provide internationally agreed multilateral forums to address issues of non-proliferation and disarmament. New initiatives that bypass the existing multilateral framework offer only temporary solutions on counter-proliferation, non-proliferation and non-compliance. Unequal and restricted Security Council action cannot supplant or circumvent multilateral negotiating processes. Unilateral restrictions and selective regimes will not promote security; they will exacerbate

insecurity. Elaboration of treaty regimes is no doubt an arduous exercise, but once treaties have been agreed freely they have a better chance of commanding adherence and compliance.

One definite way to move forward is to activate the Conference on Disarmament by breaking its chronic and by now unsustainable impasse. The deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament is political, not procedural. Therefore, it cannot be broken by semantics or by clever proposals for a programme of work. What we need is the political will to engage in substantive negotiations on all issues, not a quick fix to address only some of them.

This is a moment for reflection. We must not just lament our past and recent failures but must look to the future with the vision required to realize the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation in ways that enhance the security of all States and thus promote global peace and security.

As the steward of this important Committee, Mr. Chairman, you have a unique opportunity to evolve a new synthesis, a new consensus. During this very session, you could hold informal consultations to map out a collective future strategy. We assure you of our full support in such an endeavour.

Mr. Choisuren (Mongolia): It is indeed a pleasure to see the representative of a friendly country presiding over the work of the First Committee. I congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your well deserved election. I assure you of my delegation's full support and assistance in the discharge of your duties.

Mongolia fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Let me join many previous speakers in expressing disappointment over the situation that we are confronted with today in multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation discussions. The paralysis that has afflicted the Conference on Disarmament for eight consecutive sessions, deadlock at the Disarmament Commission over the past two years, the unsuccessful seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and, last but not least, the complete failure to arrive at agreed language pertaining to disarmament and non-proliferation in the outcome document (resolution 60/1) of the September summit have dealt a heavy blow to international efforts in this field.

The present situation is completely unacceptable against the backdrop of soaring global military spending and the catastrophic scenario of the possible marriage between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

The failure at the NPT Review Conference was thus particularly disappointing as it shut the door for another five long years on addressing and making headway on vital issues related to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. On the other hand the Review Conference vividly demonstrated the undiminished validity and centrality of the NPT as a cornerstone of the entire international arms control regime and the strong commitment of the world's nations to this vital instrument of international law. My country, guided by its internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free status and its longstanding and principled position as an advocate of nuclear disarmament, is committed to exert all efforts to contribute to the efforts to overcome the present impasse.

The mere existence of nuclear weapons represents a sword of Damocles over the head of mankind. We must get rid of these most inhumane and destructive weapons. The tragic legacy of Nagasaki and Hiroshima 60 years ago is a sobering reminder of their inanity and despicable cruelty. Retention and further development of something that can never be used, and if used would leave neither winners nor losers, is not only beyond comprehension but also serves as an invitation to further nuclear proliferation.

My President stated during the September world summit that "We need to build a safer world, in which ... deadly weapons do not fall into the wrong hands and technology is used for the betterment of human life" (*A/60/PV.5, p. 26*). The NPT is the right instrument to make this vision a reality. To do so, the Treaty ought to be implemented in its entirety.

The NPT has three pillars. Common sense dictates that each pillar has to be given equal importance or the whole structure runs the risk of collapsing. If we are to maintain and reinforce the credibility of the global non-proliferation regime, we cannot confine ourselves to the challenges confronting the non-proliferation provisions of the NPT. Disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy must be given equal priority.

One of the key issues that have so far frustrated the full implementation of the NPT is the lack or insufficiency of progress on the part of nuclear-weapon States in complying with their disarmament obligations and commitments set forth in article VI of the NPT and the 13 disarmament steps agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. In this regard, my country is convinced that more vigorous and irreversible implementation by nuclear-weapon States of their unequivocal commitment to nuclear disarmament would considerably bolster the motivation of non-nuclear-weapons States to adhere strictly to the provisions of the NPT. My delegation notes the completion of the deactivation of the entire force of 50 Peacekeeper intercontinental ballistic missiles by the United States. It, however, underscores the imperative that the principle of irreversibility must be applied to nuclear disarmament and to nuclear and other related arms control and reduction measures.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are instrumental in strengthening the non-proliferation regime and achieving the objective of complete nuclear disarmament. My country reiterates its support for establishing such zones throughout the world. In that regard, the First Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties That Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, held in Mexico from 26 to 28 April 2005, was an important contribution to endeavours to consolidate existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and promote the establishment of new ones. That Conference was also helpful in further strengthening Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status: the Tlatelolco Declaration proclaimed recognition and full support of Mongolia's international nuclear-weapon-free status.

Mongolia is pleased that the fourth round of six-party talks, held last month in Beijing, succeeded in adopting a joint statement reflecting the interests of the parties concerned. This augurs well for the future negotiations. The implementation of the commitments assumed by the parties will play an important role in achieving the goal of a denuclearized Korean peninsula and in strengthening peace and security in the region of North-East Asia.

My delegation underscores the inalienable right of non-nuclear-weapon States that have fully complied with their obligations under the NPT to participate in the fullest possible exchanges of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Proof of compliance with a treaty regime is imperative for a country to enjoy fully the various privileges and rights conferred by the relevant legal instruments. The NPT is no exception.

In this context, there should be no doubt that only those States that are in full and verified compliance with their non-proliferation obligations are entitled to exercise the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We must therefore seek to devise ways to control proliferation risks while ensuring that the inalienable right of States parties to the NPT to enjoy the benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear energy remains intact. An effective way to guarantee that and to prevent latent proliferation is through reinforcing the authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency by achieving universal adoption of an additional protocol, which, together with a comprehensive safeguards agreement, should rightly be recognized as a verification standard.

The fact that there are 176 signatories and 125 ratifications of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) testifies to its near universality and to the wide support it enjoys from an overwhelming majority of nations of the world. However, the Treaty is still far from fully operational, as no progress has been recorded since last year on ratifications by those remaining 11 States on whose ratification its entry into force depends. Let me reiterate here that continuing moratoriums on tests, though welcome, can never be a substitute for the legally binding prohibition enshrined in the Treaty.

The verification regime established under the CTBT is unparalleled in its global reach. My country is eager to further explore the possible benefits for disaster alert warning, including with respect to earthquakes and other calamities, offered by the International Monitoring System (IMS) in addition to its essential function of verification. Extensive use of data accumulated within the IMS for scientific and civilian purposes has real potential to assist in the development efforts of many countries.

Conclusion of a universal and verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty, an unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States and an international instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space should be pursued as a matter of the highest priority. Likewise, negotiating a verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention and achieving the

scheduled destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles under the Chemical Weapons Convention are further vital issues for the international community.

Mongolia denounces the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of all types of anti-personnel landmines and supports the efforts undertaken by the international community to ban those dangerous weapons, which are indiscriminate in their effects. My Government's programme of action 2004-2008 sets out the clear-cut objective of acceding to the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty on a step by step basis and revealing information on the number and types of its stockpiled landmines.

The state of affairs in international disarmament and non-proliferation does not leave room for complacency. As my Norwegian colleague Ambassador Løvald said in this Committee on Monday, 3 October, a new course in multilateral arms control diplomacy is achievable. My delegation, however, considers that this will not be an easy task. A search for new formulas should help breaking the current deadlock in the existing disarmament machinery and strengthening time-tested mechanisms. It is my conviction that this Main Committee, as the most democratic and representative international security and disarmament body, has a special role to play in this respect.

Mr. Savua (Fiji): Mr. Chairman, Fiji joins others in congratulating you and the other newly elected members of the Bureau. We look forward to working with other members of the Committee to address the challenging agenda before us. Disarmament issues are of critical concern to all nations, and we are hopeful that together we can make progress towards mitigating the threats and effects of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons.

My delegation also extends its deepest sympathy to Indonesia for the terrorist attacks in Bali last week. Such attacks, which take human lives and affect national economies, should not be tolerated. They further show that no country can be completely safe from these reprehensible acts.

The growing international recognition of the linkages among the issues of peace, security, governance, human affairs and development, as affirmed at the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region last November, ought to be noted. The Declaration adopted at the First Summit of Heads of State and Government, held last year in Dar es Salaam, gave disarmament issues a high level of recognition, which has highlighted the impact that security and development intrinsically have upon each other. It is our hope that this recognition can be translated into a reduction in military budgets.

In developing nations, a high military budget has an adverse impact on development by diverting much-needed funds from internal infrastructure needs to the purchase of weapons and related military items. This is particularly acute during times of growing responsibilities and limited resources with which to meet these development requirements.

A careful balance must be struck between expenditures on security issues and other societal needs. The International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism and Security, held in Madrid this year, affirmed this by stressing the need to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and by promoting this as an effective security strategy. Ameliorating some of the root factors of terrorism through effective economic and social policies, particularly in regard to developmental assistance and foreign aid packages, is a proactive approach. The value of such approaches cannot be stressed enough in the pursuit of security for all our nations.

Fiji commends the progress made so far at the international and regional levels towards conventional arms control as well as on assistance to States in curbing illicit trafficking in small arms. Last year, in Nadi, Fiji hosted the United Nations Regional Seminar on Small Arms and Light Weapons for the South Pacific. It was a continuation of our partnership within the Pacific Islands Forum to develop a common regional approach for weapons control, as described under the Nadi Framework. In this regard, we would like to acknowledge the financial, technical and human resources assistance provided by Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

The illicit manufacture of and trafficking in light weapons is of grave concern to our region. However, we cannot curb the practice alone. Aid to increase our capacity to control our borders effectively and to improve armoury security and management practices is needed. While much has been done, we cannot rest on our laurels. There is still much left to be done, and this requires increased multilateralism and the goodwill of all Member States.

Of importance to Fiji is the sustainability of the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. The Asia-Pacific Centre has made much progress in addressing the disarmament and security concerns of our region, including commendable work on our small arms and light weapons initiatives. The Centre has also helped to coordinate a treaty creating a nuclear-free zone in the region. However, as noted by the Secretary-General, funding for the Centre has fallen critically short, and this has threatened both its effectiveness and its very survival. We welcome the efforts by the Department of Disarmament Affairs to assess the situation, and we hope that the First Committee will also be able to support solutions to bolster such an essential organization.

Fiji emphasizes the importance of other regional efforts, both in the Pacific and in other regions around the world. We are committed to remaining active members of the Pacific Island Forums, which has been tackling issues of concern to this Committee, on a regional basis. These issues include collective security, nuclear-free zones, the shipping and transport of radioactive materials and the coordination of weapons-control legislation.

Fiji believes that synergy should exist between the international and regional levels and that both are important forums in addressing security issues. Ideas, resources and strategies should be shared and should flow between all levels, so that we can learn from each other and yet maintain the flexibility to customize solutions to suit our national needs and situations.

On the question of nuclear disarmament, Fiji is also affected by fallout from nuclear testing in the Pacific region. Servicemen who participated in Operation Grapple Hook on Christmas Island in the 1950s are now, so many years later, suffering from diseases associated with their exposure. Children are born deformed, ageing is hastened and skin diseases are common. For some time, this group has been trying to solicit fair compensation for what they have suffered. Some money has been forthcoming, but it is our contention that this is insufficient to compensate them adequately and their families for their maladies. While this is not a Hiroshima or a Nagasaki, we believe it is sufficient reason for Fiji to join others and advocate complete nuclear disarmament.

Fiji remains committed to the ideals of the United Nations, including multilateral cooperation. We trust that our collective efforts here in the First Committee in the upcoming weeks will translate into laudable, yet achievable, goals and strategies as well as concrete commitments from Member States.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): Please accept our congratulations, Sir, on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Let me assure you of Brazil's full cooperation in what we hope will be a productive session.

My delegation associates itself with the views expressed by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Rio Group as well as with the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

Brazil sees the pursuit of nuclear disarmament as a fundamental priority. We fully recognize the risks of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, yet we cannot disregard the importance of reducing and dismantling existing arsenals of all such weapons.

Together with non-proliferation efforts, we must continue to work tirelessly towards nuclear disarmament. To that end, our focus must be on systematic, continuous and progressive efforts to implement the obligations set forth in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) on the basis of negotiations on effective disarmament. This, in a nutshell, will be the thrust of the New Agenda Coalition's draft resolution for the present session of the First Committee.

As a founding signatory to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, Brazil welcomes the celebration earlier this year of the First Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones. That is a development that certainly strengthens the international community's determination to continue working towards freeing the entire southern hemisphere of nuclear weapons. Together with New Zealand, Brazil will, thus, again be submitting a draft resolution on this issue.

At the most recent NPT Review Conference, Brazil sought to work on all substantive issues related to the Treaty's three pillars — nuclear disarmament, nuclear proliferation and the right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes — success on which would facilitate the ultimate goal of a world free of

nuclear weapons. Regrettably, owing to a lack of the necessary political will from several quarters, it was impossible to discuss appropriately such issues and much less to agree on a substantive final document. We are, nevertheless, of the firm opinion that the next review conference and the preparatory process for it, which will begin in 2007, must undertake a through reassessment of the implementation of the 2000 NPT document, including the agreed 13 practical steps. We also call on those few remaining countries that remain outside the NPT to accede unconditionally to the Treaty as non-nuclear States.

Brazil has signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and has been supportive of the Treaty since the very beginning of multilateral discussions on that issue. As I stated during the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT two weeks ago, full and effective implementation will represent a significant step towards nuclear disarmament, as it will contribute to balance the inherent asymmetry of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The CTBT is intended to be a bulwark against both vertical and horizontal proliferation by constraining the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and ending the development of advanced new types of weapons. It constitutes a crucial step towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. For that reason, Brazil calls upon all States, particularly those listed in annex 2, that so far have failed to sign and ratify the CTBT to do so without delay and to refrain from any activities contrary to the purposes of the Treaty and to the obligations laid out therein.

The declaration recently adopted by the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, reaffirmed the parties' determination to bring the Treaty into force and underscored its importance for global disarmament and non-proliferation.

It is regrettable that the recently concluded High-level Plenary Meeting failed to reach agreement on matters relating to disarmament and non-proliferation. This lost opportunity further underscores the challenges to the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime. The challenges imposed by those developments will not, however, lessen our determination to pursue the objective of achieving the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

Strengthening multilateralism is the only means of effectively tackling security concerns common to the whole of mankind. The continued lack of consensus on a programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament and the difficulty of arriving at an agreed agenda for the Disarmament Commission are unacceptable. With regard to the Conference on Disarmament, it is clear that a balanced programme of work must encompass the simultaneous establishment of four subsidiary bodies: on nuclear disarmament, our highest priority; on a fissile material treaty; on the prevention of an arms race in outer space; and on negative security assurances. Those four core issues cannot be evaded; nor can we pick and choose from among them, although negotiations and discussions on them should be dealt with on the basis of different time frames and perspectives.

Brazil concurs with the assessment that terrorism and the prospects of further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are prominent among contemporary threats to international peace and security. One of the most terrifying possibilities is that non-State actors might acquire and use such weapons. We must endeavour to prevent this from ever happening, while acting strictly within accepted principles and norms of international law. No less challenging, however, is the lack of progress — even setbacks — in the field of disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament. As the Foreign Minister of Brazil, Mr. Celso Amorim, stated at the opening of the general debate at this session of the General Assembly,

> "We will continue to lend our support to increased international cooperation in the fight against terrorism and in the struggle to eliminate its deep-rooted causes.
>
> "Such efforts must be undertaken with due respect for international law and human rights. The fight against terrorism cannot be viewed in terms of police repression alone. Nor can such [acts] result in absurd and indiscriminate killing, like terrorism itself." (*A/60/PV.9, p. 6*)

Mr. Banze (Mozambique): Allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee at its present session. I also extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. I am confident that under your able guidance, we will manage to find a way forward as we discuss the pressing matters on the

Committee's agenda. I would like also to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba, for the way he conducted the work of the Committee at the fifty-ninth session.

I express my Government's deepest condolences on the recent tragic terrorist attacks in Bali, Indonesia, which claimed many innocent lives and caused the destruction of property.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group and by Botswana on behalf of the Southern African Development Community.

My delegation shares the concerns of the Secretary-General and others over successive failures: first, that of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in May this year, and secondly, the failure of the recently concluded High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly to reach a meaningful conclusion on the issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Lack of progress on that important issue is a matter of serious concern, given its profound implications for the overall stability of our planet, which is characterized by ever growing threats to international peace and security.

Thus, while we express our disappointment at such setbacks, it is our hope that goodwill will prevail so that there can be consensus on the steps needed to address those vital issues. We have managed to reach consensus on many other important issues on today's agenda; we strongly believe in the need to find common ground on this issue as well. We strongly believe that only through strict adherence to multilateralism and with the participation of all concerned can we succeed in building confidence among Member States and thus reduce the need to develop nuclear weapons.

My delegation shares the view that our approach to the NPT should be based on its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the right of all States parties to undertake research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Successful implementation of the relevant provisions of the NPT requires all nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States to shoulder their share of responsibilities in that regard in good faith.

Likewise, all States should commit themselves to ensuring the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by acceding to and ratifying the Treaty. In the meantime, the moratorium on nuclear test explosions should be maintained. In addition, other international instruments related to weapons of mass destruction, including the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, must be universalized to ensure their effectiveness for international security.

My Government remains committed to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Throughout the years, history has demonstrated that such weapons, due to their easy availability, are a continued, growing source of instability and crime and that they undermine the development efforts of many countries, in particular developing countries.

To deal with matters related to the prevention, combat and eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, Mozambique has established a national commission on small arms, COPRECAL, which has been crucial in our efforts to curb that illicit trade. The Government has striven to ensure that COPRECAL can assume its role in curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Nevertheless, further financial and substantial technical assistance is needed to make COPRECAL fully operational. The establishment of a national action plan to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacture, trade, trafficking and use of small arms and light weapons is among the ongoing actions requiring such assistance.

My Government wishes to express its determination to continue to support and complement the current efforts aimed at creating an international instrument to identify, mark and trace small arms and light weapons with respect to the illicit trade in such weapons. Similarly, we are committed to the Ottawa Convention on Anti-personnel Landmines, because we regard its implementation as the best way to free the world from those mines.

In that regard, we commend the successful outcome of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, held in Nairobi in

November and December 2004. It made a timely contribution to strengthening implementation of the Convention. We commend the Government of Kenya for organizing the Conference.

In Mozambique, we are committed to developing efforts to minimize the effects of landmines through demining programmes and humanitarian assistance. From 1992 to 2004, our programme has resulted in the destruction of some 112,000 landmines, the dismantling of more than 130,000 of those insidious weapons and the clearing of some 228 million square metres throughout the country.

Although the situation has tangibly improved since the programme was launched, overall, anti-personnel landmines still pose a great danger to human life and to the social and economic development of our country. For instance, from 1996 through 2004, 427 landmine accidents were recorded, causing 655 victims, of which 246 died as a result of the injuries they sustained. Between January and August this year, eight incidents were reported, resulting in 18 casualties, including eight deaths.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all countries and organizations that have joined in my Government's efforts to free our country of landmines. I also take this opportunity to appeal for the international community's continued support in assisting Mozambique to create a domestic capacity for dealing with the humanitarian and economic dimensions of demining and for stockpile destruction so that we can conclude the process by 2009, as required by the Ottawa Convention. That will contribute not only to our people's security but also to a more complementary and comprehensive international development agenda, in particular for the developing countries.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming my Government's belief that the issues of disarmament and international security can best be addressed through close cooperation, multilateralism and consensus-building, taking into account the interests of all Member States. To that end, my delegation will spare no effort to attain those goals as we consider the Committee's agenda in the months ahead.

Mr. Yawo (Togo) (*spoke in French*): Before I discuss some of the concerns that we all share in this Organization, as well as our views on certain problems that still face the international community in disarmament and international security, I should like, on behalf of the delegation of Togo, warmly to congratulate you, Sir, and all the members of the Bureau on your election to preside over our Committee. My congratulations also go to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs on his very detailed and instructive opening remarks, as well as for the various reports and notes before the Committee.

My delegation endorses the statements made by the representative of Indonesia, speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by the representative of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the African Group.

One essential task of the United Nations since its inception has been the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of the economic and social development of Member States. Sixty years after the Organization's founders made that commitment, reaffirmed at the summits in 2000 and 2005, peoples throughout the international community who wish to live in a world of concord, peace and solidarity continue to see reality fall far short of their expectations. The international community has never stopped striving to attain the noble goals and principles of the United Nations, and yet it has not fully managed to make them a reality. In other words, the quest for peace and peacebuilding through complete disarmament remains at the heart of our concerns.

The disquiet surrounding that issue continues to grow, given the understanding that nothing significant is being done about the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Indeed, the Secretary-General has quite rightly exhorted Member States to demonstrate greater resolve in addressing that issue and notes in his report that

> "[i]n May the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons failed to reach agreement on any substantive issues. The opportunity was missed to address the most pressing problems of not only the nuclear non-proliferation regime, but also of international security more broadly." (*A/60/1, para. 76*)

Disarmament and non-proliferation continue to be matters of concern to our world, notwithstanding the relevant existing legal instruments designed to help us eliminate weapons of mass destruction, small arms and light weapons. It is unfortunate indeed that the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-

Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in New York in May 2005, proved to be a manifest failure. One way or another, we must relaunch debate in order to arrive at an agreement acceptable to all.

Togo therefore unreservedly supports all concrete measures taken by the United Nations and other entities to attain the goals of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, along with the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

The issue of small arms and light weapons, which is equally critical in many parts of our planet, and in Africa in particular, deserves special attention by dint of the devastation wrought by those weapons on populations. It is to be hoped that the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, scheduled to be held in July 2006, will allow us to intensify the fight against the stockpiling and destabilizing proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

The Assembly's forthcoming adoption of a draft international instrument to enable States rapidly and reliably to identify and trace small arms and light weapons will also mark a noteworthy advance in that regard. My delegation wishes particularly to stress the point that the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms are sources of great alarm to the international community in general and to Africa in particular, where the phenomenon is fuelled by armed conflict and social and political crises. Belligerents and ex-combatants become armed bands that now only sow terror and desolation among peaceful people, but destabilize our countries and undermine the foundations of our societies. Consequently, we are seeing a ubiquitous and chronic rise in cross-border crime, armed robbery and roadblocks, with their concomitant toll in human lives.

Faced with that situation, the subregions of our continent are organizing themselves. Initiatives are under way within the Economic Community of West African States. Of the many structures being established to eradicate the scourge, I shall limit myself to citing the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development in Africa, the essential mission of which is the coordination of all priority steps to attain the moratorium goals.

In the context of monitoring small arms and light weapons, we also note the role played by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. My country hosts the Centre and does its best to assist in its functions. We welcome the Centre's work, in conjunction with African subregional organizations, in fighting the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. We therefore hope that the Centre will be provided with sufficient financial, human and material resources to enable it to respond favourably to the many requests it receives. I hereby thank the donors for the many ways in which they are helping the Centre in its tasks. I also stress that the Centre's current chronic financial difficulties cannot be solved simply by moving it elsewhere.

We welcome the commitment undertaken by our countries to maintaining peace and security themselves and to preventing, managing and peacefully settling crises and conflicts. Even so, it must be noted that our countries cannot effectively meet the challenge of peace and stability unless their partners support them and remain sensitive to their concerns and ready to provide appropriate assistance. The delegation of Togo therefore wishes to stress the need for cooperation between the international community and our countries, as well as complementarity in our initiatives to maintain peace and security.

We cannot overemphasize the fact that the injustice arising from the unequal distribution of our planet's wealth is the primary cause of the many crises and wars hindering the development of harmonious relations among States. There is undoubtedly an intrinsic nexus between peace and justice, and between peace and development. Peace and security will be in ongoing jeopardy so long as just measures are not taken to push back the frontiers of poverty and want that weaken the foundations of our societies.

The Secretary-General emphasizes in his report that "[e]stimated global military expenditures exceeded $1 trillion in 2004 and were projected to keep rising" (ibid., para. 79). Mindful of the immense development difficulties the world is facing, it is highly desirable that efforts be made to reverse the upward trend in those expenditures in favour of investments to achieve sustainable development.

We express the hope that this session will see a further commitment by our countries to freeing greater resources for the promotion of development and for

making our common Organization a special instrument for coherence and rapprochement among peoples. We wish every measure of success for our work and hope that this debate will contribute to building a world of peace and solidarity.

Ms. Panckhurst (New Zealand): We are very pleased to see you, Sir, in the role of Chairman of the First Committee. Let me assure you of New Zealand's support as you take the work of the Committee forward.

The past year has been a difficult one. At a time when progress on disarmament and non-proliferation objectives is more important than ever, we have lost three significant opportunities — the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, and in the Conference on Disarmament — to work together as a global community to improve the international security situation.

New Zealand was extremely disappointed that the NPT Review Conference was unable to agree a substantive outcome and that so much of the time available for discussion on concerted strengthening and implementation of the Treaty was consumed by wrangling over questions of procedure. The Treaty's status as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation was reaffirmed by many States at the Review Conference, but clearly we need to find new ways of working together to achieve its implementation. Commitments agreed by consensus under previous review conferences of the Treaty, particularly the 13 practical steps and the unequivocal undertaking to eliminate nuclear arsenals, are outstanding and must be acted upon. Creating a world safe from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is in all our interests.

Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes. As noted in the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, which includes New Zealand, we remain convinced that positive progress on nuclear disarmament would improve global security with respect to proliferation.

New Zealand was therefore deeply concerned at the failure of the high-level summit to agree any language on disarmament and non-proliferation. That gives a misleading message about the ongoing importance of addressing those critical issues at the highest possible level within an international framework. We commend the seven nations, led by Norway, that made such efforts to gain agreement on a meaningful statement on disarmament and non-proliferation for our leaders.

The third lost opportunity is represented by the continuing failure of the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a programme of work. It has now been eight years since the Conference was able to undertake any substantive negotiations. The longer the impasse continues, the more irrelevant the Conference will render itself in international mechanisms. The willingness of some States to use rules of procedure as a means to prevent progress going forward continues to be of concern. The difficulties that confront the Conference on Disarmament are not the result of inadequacies in the scope or currency of its agenda. If there were a political willingness to agree on the elements of a programme of work, the agenda would almost certainly be treated as flexible enough to accommodate it. During New Zealand's presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, we conducted extensive bilateral consultations, which revealed that the overwhelming majority of member States were ready to get down to work. We urge those States withholding consent to the commencement of negotiations to approach discussions on the work programme with a renewed degree of flexibility.

Despite New Zealand's deep regret at the wasted potential for progress at the multilateral level, we have continued our work on disarmament and non-proliferation objectives where possible. We have committed a further $3 million over the next four years to the G-8 Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction to help safeguard and destroy the unsecured legacies of weapons of mass destruction in the former Soviet Union.

New Zealand has already contributed $1.2 million towards the destruction of chemical weapons. That is a tangible demonstration of our support for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, a multilateral disarmament treaty that applies equally to all parties and is verifiably and irreversibly eliminating weapons of mass destruction.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction still lacks any verification mechanism. That remains a major hole in multilateral defences at a time when biological weapons have been identified as a growing threat. We hope that the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention will provide an opportunity next year to consider how to address that issue.

At last month's Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, we emphasized New Zealand's continued strong commitment to the Treaty and its early entry into force. We will continue to work to achieve that objective.

We commend the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Director General ElBaradei for their continuing work in verifying that nuclear energy programmes are for peaceful uses. We support the Director General's call for States to allow the Agency more stringent verification measures.

We call on Iran to put in place full transparency and cooperation with the IAEA, to respect all its commitments and to continue negotiations on long-term arrangements.

We welcome the outcome of the recent six-party talks in Beijing and the commitment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes and to returning at an early date to the NPT and to IAEA safeguards.

Progress on conventional weapons has been more encouraging over the past year. The States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction held a successful first Review Conference and agreed an action plan which will guide them through the next phase of implementation, particularly as the first set of deadlines for mine eradication and destruction approaches in 2009.

The threat posed to peace and security by the excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of illicit small arms and light weapons remains a significant challenge. At the same time, we are encouraged by the international community's progress in strengthening controls, as evidenced by the entry into force of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the adoption of the marking and tracing instrument earlier this year. New Zealand will continue to work closely with the countries in our region. We look forward to a successful outcome of the 2006 review of the programme of action.

In conclusion, New Zealand believes that it is now more important than ever for us to work towards strengthened multilateral, legally binding instruments, with verification provisions that are as strong as necessary to give the confidence that will finally allow us to eliminate weapons of mass destruction from our world. In our view, the most important moves that we could make collectively — for both disarmament and non-proliferation — would be to ensure compliance with the NPT in all its aspects, to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force, and to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.